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YORKSHIRE UFO SOCIETY

PROJECT RED BOOK

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AUSTRALIAN UFOs PRE 1947
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RENDLESHAM: THE ELVIS CONNECTION

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"Don't threaten me with a dead fish!"

THE JOHN KEEL INTERVIEW (part 1)

Andy Roberts

(Originally published in *UFO BRIGANTIA*, Winter 1992)

(Editor's note -My favourite UFO/paranormal book of all time is John Keel's *The Mothman Prophecies*. Whether read as the absolute truth, a tongue-in-cheek piece of fiction, a good scary horror story, or a mix of the above, it remains a benchmark of the genre for both breathless Believers and Sniggering Sceptics alike. It had always been my wish to interview Keel, but for numerous reasons, not least of which Keel's age and health, and the mass media assault on him surrounding the release of the Hollywood blockbuster version of *TMP*, it seemed that the interview was not to be. However, David Clarke & Andy Roberts came to the rescue to provide the next best thing: the opportunity to re-publish a 10-year-old interview with Keel from their classic publication *UFO Brigantia*. I think you will find that much of what Keel has to say in 1992 is relevant even in 2002.)

Ever since I was about 11 years old and read Keel's first book, *Jadoo*, I was obsessed by him. Others felt like that too, apparently, as I later came to find out. He's one of the few people to have revolutionised how we think about ufology and strange phenomena generally and I'd long wanted him to speak at a UK UFO conference. It took three years to get him here but as many of you know Keel spoke at the annual IUN conference in August this year. Although debilitated by jet-lag, the effects of diabetics and the unwanted attentions of Men In Black from BUFORA Keel still managed to give a stirring speech to the troops which left many people leaving the hall shaking their heads and muttering "That's wiped the floor with Bill Moore's explanation of Roswell." This was the first time he had publicly spoken in the UK and he may not come this way again. If you missed it it just serves you right. I spoke to Keel at length over the three days he spent in Sheffield and learned many things, some of which I agreed with, some of which I didn't. But what struck me overall was Keel's grasp of ufology, the perspective he has and his sense of humour. When the conference was over I managed to get a 'formal' interview with him. Here it is....

ANDY ROBERTS: John, could you tell me how you first became interested in Fortean subjects and UFOs in particular?

JOHN KEEL: It was so long ago. You know, I was reading Charles Fort when I was very young, when I was about 14 or 15 years old. So, I was reading *Amazing Stories*, in those days too, and they were getting letters to *Amazing Stories* about things which people had seen in the sky – this is before 1947, and I was writing a newspaper column at the time for my home-town newspaper and I did a couple of columns on that kind of thing, lights in the sky and people would see contrails high overhead and they would think that they were some kind of spaceship or something and they'd write to *Amazing Stories* about it. In those days, in the '40s contrails were very rare, an airplane usually has to be very high altitude to leave a contrail.

Anyway, I was around when the whole UFO thing broke and I remember I was standing in a carnival in my home town and I was standing in the middle of the Midway in the carnival and a friend of mine came up and said "Hey

Keel, have you seen this newspaper story about this guy out West who saw some strange things over the mountains", and it was like a shock to me, I thought, "Oh my God, it's starting!" I remember thinking that, that it's starting now and of course that was the beginning, that was the Arnold story but I hadn't yet seen it in the papers.

The Kenneth Arnold report did not get much play in the papers in the north-east, it was mostly in the west. It took a while for it to reach the east in the magazines and so on.

AR: Do you think the Arnold sighting and the subsequent UFO hysteria was a bit of a reaction to WWII? The world had been used to earth-threatening excitement for several years and then peace broke out. Do you think we were waiting for 'something' perhaps, and that the Arnold sighting triggered that 'something'?

JK: Yeah, but it was also what we called the silly season. In the newspaper business in those days the Summer months were very slow

news-wise, there wasn't much news. So they would seize on something like that. One year it would be the Loch Ness Monster sightings, the next year it would be UFOs. We don't really have a silly season anymore, we have a silly season the whole year round now.

AR: What did you believe UFOs were at the time?

JK: I assumed, after reading Fort, that they must be spaceships. Fort didn't really come right out and advocate the ET thesis but he said that was something there and that it had been around for a long time because he's traced reports all the way back and Fort was very persuasive if you could get through his style. He had an odd style of writing, a humorous style which a lot of people to this day don't quite comprehend.

AR: Do you think you've copied your style in any way from Fort's? You have also got a very distinctive writing style which I think 'tricks' people intentionally into believing...

JK: I sort of sometimes satirise on Fort. Fort used to use certain phrases like, 'I have a theory, that the stars are hanging from strings and the sky is only 800 feet up', and that would be a joke and people would seriously quote that and say. "Well Charles Fort thinks the stars are hanging on strings".

But I think my own style sort of evolved over the years. I was writing a humorous column as a kid. The way I got into the writing business was I wrote a letter to the editor of my hometown newspaper, I was about 12 years old, and he thought it was a very funny letter and he called me into his office and he asked me to write a column and we called the column *Scraping the Keel* and so it was a column of alleged humour and I would make little kind of childish jokes and it was quite popular and so in my little hometown was about 500 people so in a very short time I was the most famous person in the town.

Then I started the high school newspaper called there and I called it *The Jester*, because I was making fun of the school, let's face it.

Then when I turned 16 I got so bored with school because in this town there was no course for me to take in this school. I took all the science courses in one year, courses that were considered the toughest courses,

chemistry and physics and so on. I passed them like that and the only courses left were...they had an agricultural course, but I wasn't about to become a farmer, and they had a business course but I wasn't really interested in business and so I left school when I was sixteen and I started writing full time, or as much as I could. I was working on the farm too.

I started sending stories to the magazines in New York City and sooner or later people started sending me cheques! My first cheque was for two dollars! And I was really thrilled by that and by the time I was 17 I had sold quite a few short pieces for a very small amount of money and I decided that I was going to go to New York and make my fortune. So I left my family - they didn't believe I was going to go to New York, they thought, "Well, he'll be back tomorrow".

I arrived in New York with 75 cents. Didn't know a soul except editors that I'd corresponded with but I didn't know them well enough to socialize with them. I was just a country bumpkin in the big city, but there was one magazine editor that owed me some money and I went to see him and I thought I'd be able to live on this money for a while because they owed me quite a lot on money. Quite a lot was like, thirty dollars. But they were going broke and they paid me off 50 cents at a time and so I would go there every day and get my 50 cents and I slept on park benches. I did all the homeless things, but in those days you were safe, today you'd be murdered the second day.

Can you imagine a 17-year old boy in a big dangerous city like New York? I quickly settled in Greenwich Village where all the artists and writers were, and within two weeks I knew everybody and became the editor of a poetry magazine, had a little office there in Greenwich Village, and that's how it all started.

AR: When did you start travelling?

That was years later when I was drafted into the army in the Korean War. Instead of shipping me to Korea they shipped me to Germany which was a very good move on their part, 'cos they were shooting people in Korea! They assigned me to a radio station in Germany, I had done some work in radio in New York, and TV was just beginning in New York and I'd done a little TV work, and the army, believe it or not, they saw my record

there, and they assigned me to a radio station – in fact the biggest radio station in the world at that time, American Forces Network. I started writing radio programmes for them and within one year I was promoted to chief of productions for the whole network, at 20-21 years old and I'm practically running the whole network!

Then when my two years in the army were up they offered me a civilian job and I had a choice – return to New York or stay with the army, and I stayed another year as a civilian in Frankfurt and they gave me a nice apartment and a very good salary and so on. But I used to dream up my own assignments. I sent myself off to Egypt to do a broadcast from the Great Pyramid! We had a soldiers singing contest where I had to go around to all the army camps in Europe and pick out the best singer in each army camp and so I took a tour of France! I had a chauffeured limousine that took me around France and I judged this singing contest, but that was just one of many, many scams that I had going.

AR: Sounds like Sergeant Bilko!

JK: I also did a radio broadcast from the Castle of Frankenstein, there really is a Castle Frankenstein. I did a Halloween broadcast from there, which was a very big success, the newspapers and magazines like *Time* compared me to Orson Welles, because Orson Welles had pulled off this famous Halloween programme of 1938.

So now *Stars and Stripes* was always writing about me and running pictures of me and I was suddenly the most famous soldier in Germany! But after being there as a civilian for almost a year I'd saved almost all of my salary during that year, they offered me a better contract to stay on and then I had a big decision. Whether to stay there forever – I could still be over there! But I decided that I would take a wild chance and take the money I had saved and go around the world, which I had always wanted to do. I especially wanted to visit India. So I took my savings and I left Germany and I went first back to Egypt where I'd done the broadcast from the Great Pyramid.

AR: Any particular reason you went back to Egypt?

JK: Because I felt a strong relationship to Egypt, a lot of people feel that, it's rather

mysterious, you almost feel like your ancestors are from Egypt and I wasn't the only one to feel that. I've heard other people talk about it too, although I felt no kinship at all to the modern Arabs, the modern Egyptians, but I felt something about the land of Egypt. I really felt a strong relationship to it. So I lived there for almost a year.

AR: Was it during this time that you saw the UFO at the Aswan Dam?

JK: I saw a UFO at the old Aswan Dam, they later built a new one, but there was an old Aswan Dam and I was down there and there were a lot of people around there, there must have been a scattering of like a hundred people all visiting the Dam, and so on, and we saw this circular thing that was spinning. It appeared in a clear blue sky and this was in 1954. Later I found out there were sightings all over the Middle East at that time in 1954 and of course 1954 was a very big year in France and I think Britain was also included. That was a major year. This thing that I saw was like the Saturn-shaped objects you've seen drawings of. In other words it appeared the centre of, it was not moving but the outside was spinning. A very odd thing and various people were looking at it with me and I asked some of them what they thought it was and what the altitude was...and everyone had a different answer. You had 200 witnesses and you had 200 answers! I thought it was about 200-300 feet in the air, but some people thought it was 1000 feet, 5000 feet and because you don't know the size of the thing you can't judge the altitude of it.

Right there, in two seconds, I was convinced that flying saucers existed! There was no way anybody could tell me after that that there's no such thing as flying saucers.

AR: Where did you go from Egypt?

JK: I lived in Egypt for a while then I moved on across the desert. I went to Baghdad and I arrived broke in Baghdad which had become my normal condition because I had an agent in New York who would send me money and sometimes the money would be delayed or become SNAFU. I was broke in Baghdad and I quickly learned, whenever I was broke, to check into the most expensive hotel and because I was an American and had that famous grebe passport they never questioned me and just thought, "Hey, he's an American,

he must be filthy rich!" So I would check into the best hotel and eat in their restaurants until the money came through and I never got questioned once!

From Baghdad I took the long trip down through the Persian Gulf on some kind of funny boat and ended up in India and then I spent a great deal of time in India because it's a fascinating country.

AR: Yeah. In *Jadoo* you travelled through India, sort of debunking the so-called paranormal events such as live burials, snake charmers, the rope-trick and so on, could you tell us a little about that?

JK: I always had a childhood interest in magic and I continue to this day to have an interest in magic, and I wanted to find the famous street magicians of India and when I did find street magicians they were all doing card tricks! Which they had bought by mail from London! It was very hard to find anyone doing the famous Indian tricks! I searched for the Indian Rope Trick and I found various forms of it being performed but they were not the authentic Indian Rope Trick. They were little faked tricks for the tourists.

AR: What was so special about snake-charming?

JK: Snake-charming had always fascinated me as a kid on the farm. I started studying herpetology and reading books on the subject and I had a neighbour who used to go out and catch rattlesnakes and sell them to some company that needed rattlesnakes. I used to go out with him and so at a very early age I learned quite a lot about snakes and reptiles so I actually studied snake-charming with some of these snake-charmers except there's not much to study because the charmer is blowing a pipe and moving his hands back and forth and the snake is trying to strike at his hands. The snake can't hear so it's all showmanship, the people watching think the snake is dancing to the tune of the pipe but the snake is just trying to kill the piper!

AR: Did anything unusual happen to you while you were in India?

JK: I had many fortune type experiences in India. One strange thing that happened more than once was strange people would come up

to me and say that they'd been waiting for me to appear – this was probably baloney, and they'd say "There's an American tourist, let's take him for big bucks." I got very sophisticated very fast and I went into the Himalayan mountains because at the time in the '50s there was a lot of publicity about the Abominable Snowman. There were a number of expeditions into the mountains looking for the Snowman, I think the *Daily Mail* in London sent a big expedition, and I figured I might be able to get a photograph of the Abominable Snowman and sell it to *Life* magazine or something.

So I went into the mountains and to the little country of Sikkim, and I crossed the border into Tibet. Not very far though, 'cos I'm six feet tall and Tibetans are four feet tall and the Chinese were in there and they'd see this six foot tall guy and say "That is not a real Tibetan". At least I could say I'd been to Tibet.

AR: Whilst in *Jadoo* you debunk all the common or garden yogic tricks, when you get into the Himalayas you seem to become less sceptical and have some experiences of the 'remote viewing' which the monks do. Any comment on that?

JK: I was very impressed with what some of those monks, lamas, were doing. They seemed to know every move that I was making. It was like I was being watched through the whole trip and so I would arrive at a monastery and they would be expecting me and they had dinner ready! I was quite impressed with a lot of that.

AR: How do you think they did it – was it because of the time they spent training their minds?

JK: Yeah – what else is there to do there!?

I had the experience of running into a lama on a snow covered mountain and he was stark naked and he didn't mind the cold at all. They weren't surprised to see me and in some of these areas, this is in the '50s, they had never seen a white man before. I think in Sikkim at the time there had only been 400 white men throughout their history in that little country. Nepal was practically inaccessible and Bhutan was inaccessible. You could cross into Bhutan and never come out again.

AR: Did you actually see the Yeti?

JK: I was with some natives, I hate to use the word natives, I was with some of the people who lived there, I was the stranger. And across the lake we saw a brown figure, a large brown figure moving around in the brush across the lake, and the natives with me said that was a Yeti. Now it could have been a bear, or it could have been anything but they told me it was a Yeti because they knew it would make me happy and so that was my Yeti! I saw the Yeti footprints a couple of times, the famous Yeti footprints which are huge. If you see the footprints, you say "Well maybe I don't wanna meet this guy!"

AR: Do you think that the Yeti exists in the physical realm?

JK: Then I did, yes. Although all of the stories about the Yeti which I heard from different people seemed very demonic. They believed it was bad luck to see one of them. Everybody has a story to tell about the Yeti in those days, everybody who lived in those areas. But now I'm not so sure the Yeti is a real animal. At that time I was absolutely convinced.

AR: I know you don't want to talk about the Mothman but I'll just ask one question. I'm still puzzled by one bit of *The Mothman Prophecies* – the chapter entitled *Beelzebub Visits West Virginia*, where you relate the story of how you called at a house to make a 'phone call and because you were not from the area people misidentified you as the Devil?! Is this part of your tricking device which continues through the book – to make people see that everything isn't as it seems?

JK: As you know the book was written several years after the events and it was very difficult to get a New York publisher even interested in it and I needed a strong opening and this was a true story where my car had run off the road on a very rainy night and I was dressed in a necktie and a full suit. You didn't see that very often in a back road in West Virginia, a black suit, and I went around pounding on doors to get somebody to call a tow truck for me. It turned out that the people that finally made the call were people that were on the bridge the day that it collapsed.

Next day they told everybody they knew that a strange man in a black suit and a beard which

were rare in those days, called and he must have been the Devil, so that made me part of the folklore and I found out years later that people were still telling that story, that the Devil had come around to these houses on the back road.

AR: I think that says a lot about human beings. The majority of your West Virginia sightings seem to have been just odd blobs of light into which people have read something else – are you saying then that we live in an environment which still has many hidden, but natural mysteries with which we can interact and interpret?

JK: Yeah, we seem to be surrounded by almost an invisible world that can manipulate us in any way. In fact, I just had a letter before I left New York. I had a letter from a man named Henry Belk. His family are very rich, they own a chain of 400 big stores in the South, and Henry for many years has been investigating psychic surgery, that's his thing and I was astonished to get this letter the other day, he said that after all these years of investigating psychic surgery he had decided that the psychic surgery was being done by some invisible force. The surgeon was just an instrument for it and Henry is evolving now a whole theory about invisible entities and so on and for him, he's very scientifically orientated, it's a surprising thing for him to come out with.

(Continued next issue: *Keel on The Cosmic Joker, The Mothman Prophecies, Ultraterrestrials and more...*)

THE VIEW FROM BRITAIN

THE JENNY RANGLES COLUMN

(Originally published in *The MUFON JOURNAL*, April 2001)

(Editor's note :Please bear in mind the original date of publication. YUFOS extends its thanks to Jenny & to Dwight Connely, editor of *The MUFON Journal*, for permission to reproduce this work.)

Over the years I have attended dozens of UFO conferences in several different countries. I have rarely failed to be thoroughly engrossed by them.

In the US, of course, MUFON hosts impressive events every year and in the UK there is at least one, usually two or three, such get togethers that are organised by the equivalent national group (BUFORA), various regional groups or UFO magazine.

These enjoyable weekends afford the opportunity to meet and hear speakers that one might have only read about in a magazine such as this one. Or indeed to simply mix with like thinking researchers and share ideas or swap theories.

Conferences have a vital social function but also serve the important purpose of promoting a group, earning it new members and subscribers. They can also be justified as a way to showcase to the general public - especially via the publicity that they tend to generate - what serious UFOlogy is up to.

So I am certainly not opposed to the regular flow of such events and agree to lecture at them whenever I can.

THE NEXT PHASE?:

However, the standard type of UFO conference has limitations that we have been discussing in the UK recently. What we have been trying to do is find a way to move forward to the next phase - to organise a type of conference that is designed differently and has a contrasting purpose to the majority of such events.

By this I mean a conference that is not aimed at the enthusiast or person who walks in off the street to hear what UFOlogy is all about. Typical conferences tend to have to cater for this kind of drive-by audience and thus undersell the opportunity to further the subject by maximising the fortune of having

so many serious UFO researchers together in one place at one time.

UFOlogy has had too few of the scientific styled events that are common in professional subjects where a set agenda is created and working specialists in that field come together with the specific intention of furthering the quest for answers in a narrowly defined goal.

This is by no means easy - of course - because it comes up against the major problem that UFOlogy tends to have - lack of money. How can you organise an international conference that is not designed to attract hundreds of paying customers through the door?

That's the debate we are having in our efforts to find a way that can create a working conference agenda that will be more than just a talking shop. It will actually set out to achieve something.

MONEY, MONEY, MONEY:

Of course, there is a way to do this. You can find a rich philanthropist - a UFO enthusiast who happens to have millions of dollars - to come up with a whopping subsidy that will help bring together the kind of people that will make a working conference buzz.

That is what happened in 1992 when over 100 UFOlogists, abductees and other researchers met for a week at MIT to discuss the abduction phenomenon and find ways to take this field forward. It was possibly the most scientifically structured conference ever put together. It certainly was an event that I will never forget.

I felt privileged to be invited to MIT and I gained an enormous amount from the structured nature of the agenda and the debate. But this was a one-off event. It happened as it did only because a hefty sum of money was donated to make it happen. If the event had been set up so

that those invited had to pay their own way to get to Boston, let alone to stay there for a week and then to pay a share of the costs of hiring the facilities needed to stage the event - I certainly could not have afforded this. And I suspect a large percentage of the UFO community would have been priced out as well.

This seems to put a bar on ever holding this kind of symposium on anything like a regular basis, because there simply are too few super rich enthusiasts willing to sponsor such ventures and only a handful of moderately rich UFOlogists who could afford to jet set around the globe and attend a pay-for-yourself type of conference unless it fortuitously gets set up in their own country or region.

BRITISH CONFERENCES:

Recognising this problem does not mean that more parochial conferences of this type could not be set up - even recognising that they are likely to be restrictive in the audience that they can attract. Indeed in the UK we have staged several such events already to test the water.

In the early 1980s, for example, a plan was conceived to create a 'code of practice' - a working set of self imposed ethics dictating to the UFOlogist how to interact with witnesses, the media, the authorities and one another. This was devised as a way to send a signal to those outside the British UFO community that we were trying to act like responsible people by generating what was in effect our own Hippocratic oath.

In order to make this work a few of us who wanted to push the concept forward put our own money into travelling the country and setting up a series of local meetings. These were staged in various major cities (such as Nottingham and Swindon) and were not advertised as public events with showcase speakers but as working events aimed to gather ideas for the code.

A local group sponsored and organised the events. We split the costs between everyone who attended (so if 20 turned up on the day and the facilities cost \$100 to book then each person was asked to pay \$5 to cover this). And this meant that everybody who was there came with the intention of working on

the project not to sit back and let others speak.

This year of local conferences was used to forge the Code of Practice and this was then taken in outline form to the next available national conference (a BUFORA event in London) so as to formally ratify and announce to the world this cumulative effort involving much of British UFOlogy working as a team. At least this experience proved what could be done!

The Code of Practice is still a success. It has been upgraded and adapted as years have gone by and is now mandatory as a means of membership into Britain's premier UFO group - BUFORA - as well as to organisations as diverse as the small team of high calibre experienced case investigators known as UFOIN and the paranormal research team ASSAP. So even 20 years later this project - that was created by different UFO groups working together as a team - demonstrates the value of a working conference.

A different kind of event was set up by BUFORA in summer 1986 to discuss the then embryonic crop circle mystery. We made this a day in which every party involved in the field at that time was given the opportunity to make their case. Those favouring hoaxes were given the chance to prove their point. As were the supporters of weather effects and of various more exotic forces.

This fascinating gathering came before the widespread media interest, several years before the book 'Circular Evidence' created a global furore and for the first (and I suspect last!) time brought together on one platform all the major players in the early years of crop circle research - including Colin Andrews, Pat Delgado, Dr Terence Meaden and Paul Fuller.

At the end of the day the audience (mostly comprising UFOlogists) voted on what they considered to be the most fruitful areas that had emerged for future research. Hoaxing and weather effects gained the most support, which was certainly a surprise to me.

A not dissimilar venture was attempted by BUFORA in December 1983 when Brenda Butler and Dot Street put their case for a major UFO event having occurred at Rendlesham Forest and science journalist Ian Ridpath countered their claims with a first

presentation of his then brand new lighthouse theory - which has been the main claim of skeptics about this case ever since.

I found this style of case debating very illuminating as it was done in a civilised manner and opened up plenty of areas of conflict that needed to be resolved. I would certainly like to see this kind of feature extended at even standard types of UFO conference where disparate views on one event or type of UFO phenomenon could be profitably debated.

A 21ST CENTURY CONFERENCE:

However, what we really want to do in Britain now is to find a type of conference that builds on the positive direction suggested by MIT. An event that takes one very specific type of UFO question and brings together every conceivable contribution that might add something useful into the discussion.

Take, for instance, car stop cases. There are several hundred of these seemingly very consistent phenomena within the UFO database but we are still less than clear how or why they occur. In the UK of late some UFOlogists are even challenging the idea that they really happen at all.

This strange idea stems from a reinvestigation of a classic car stop case during the British wave in October/November 1967. What has long thought to be an important event often debated by UFOlogists has begun to crumble under intense scrutiny - causing these people to ask if other car stops might be vulnerable to in depth investigation.

However, if we were to stage a conference exclusively devoted to this type of case then we should make a serious attempt to answer not just this but also many other related questions.

For example, we would define up front the ten most important things that need resolving, arrange the event up to a year ahead and set the challenge to researchers to come up with the data to help resolve these issues. This they can do through reinvestigating key cases, conducting statistical analyses, performing experiments, soliciting the views of outside experts - whatever it takes.

Then those who want to present their results at the conference can make this fact known a few weeks in advance and give an idea of the nature of their presentation. The timetable of a structured debate built around the questions that are being posed about the phenomenon can then be produced. This will allow a thorough assessment of the topic.

Another way in which this kind of conference can be taken beyond the normal pattern of UFO meetings is by inviting contributions from outside sources. In this instance the ten questions could - for instance - be posted in car mechanics journals, onto physics web sites, and so on, inviting participation in both the research phase and the presentation at the conference - thus involving people who may never have considered attending a UFO related event.

There are moves in the UK to get a conference of this type off the ground - if nothing else as an experiment to test the water. For there are, of course, any number of specific topics within the UFO field that could benefit from this kind of approach - in effect a structured working bee leading to a full-scale conference. Photographic evidence. Radar-visual cases. Landing traces. The list is endless.

Hopefully, if this kind of project can be successfully carried out in the UK then it will prove a model for others to follow. For there is no reason that many conferences of this kind cannot be organised all over the world. They may provide a boost that the rather moribund UFO research community needs.

Jenny Randles, April 2001

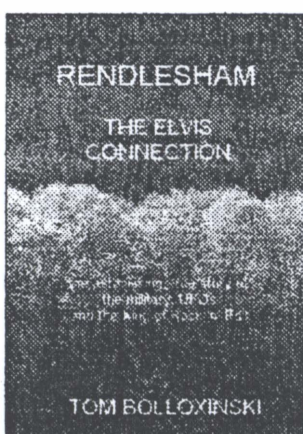
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TITLE: *RENDLESHAM:
THE ELVIS CONNECTION*

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"The astonishing, true story of the military, UFOs and the King of Rock 'n' Roll"

So states the blurb on the cover of the new hardback book from maverick U.S. UFO / paranormal investigator, Tom Bolloxinski.

Bolloxinski, a regular contributor to *Project Red Book* said recently, in these very pages:

"It seems that these days just about anyone can pick up a pen and paper and come up with a new 'spin' on the Rendlesham Forest chestnut."

Never one to be beaten, Bolloxinski has now joined that select crowd of Rendlesham researchers and can hold his head up high alongside the likes of Randles, Warren & Robins, and Bruni.

In a move many of his detractors may view as "a ham-fisted meshing of two cash-cows into a profitable, but shamelessly ridiculous whole"¹, Bolloxinski manages to prove a staggering link between the so-called "UFO Crash" in Suffolk's Rendlesham Forest, and the long-suspected "fake" death of singer Elvis Presley.

In the early hours of 27th December 1980, U.S. airmen from RAF Woodbridge witnessed strange lights and a "glowing, triangular object, with a quilted appearance" in the depths of the forest. The following night, more UFOs were seen, and pursued through the woods by the military. This story, which made headlines in *The News of The World* would become known and immortalised as the most impressive UFO case in UK history, and would be the focus of numerous books and TV investigations such as *Strange –But True*, *Unsolved Mysteries*, and *Sightings*.

One book, *Left at East Gate* by Larry Warren & Peter Robbins ventures even further, and details Warren's own bizarre experiences. According to Warren, a group of high-ranking members of the military had gathered in the dark depths of Rendlesham forest on the night of the 28th. Warren and other researchers have suggested that they were taking part in a scene reminiscent of the film "*Close Encounters of the 3rd Kind*", and that they were delegates of the first, historic meeting of an Alien race and human beings.

Bolloxinski's claims, however, are stranger still; that the clearing was actually the clandestine location of an Above Top Secret, private concert by the King of Rock 'n' Roll Elvis Presley, but one which went horribly wrong.

Although by 1980 the world believed Elvis Presley to be dead, rumours persisted that he had in fact faked his own death in order to escape the pressures of fame, Mob justice, or even the IRS. This conspiracy theory has never really been proved – until now. The whole truth though, is stranger than anyone could possibly have imagined.

According to one of Bolloxinski's sources, Presley had developed an obsessive interest in UFOs and extraterrestrial life about a year prior to his death.

"In fact, UFOs and space aliens were his favourite subject after rock 'n' roll and cheeseburgers.

"His fascination led him to ask questions at the highest levels of Government. Just as his fixation with law enforcement had led him to be made 'honorary sheriff' to dozens of towns, and an honorary member of the FBI, just to stop him pestering people, it is alleged that Elvis was shown

¹ P.Klass, *Skeptical Enquirer* review, April 2002

many Top Secret documents that proved UFOs were real.

Bolloxinski writes:

"What Elvis didn't realise, is that, just as all of Earth's TV and radio broadcasts are beamed off into the never-ending depths of space, *Love Me Tender*, *Jailhouse Rock* and other 'Pelvis' classics had been intercepted by other intelligent life-forms – 'The Grays', who, it seems, developed a similar, and unhealthy, interest in The King."

This combined fascination led to a hitherto unknown chapter in Elvis' life; an attempted Alien Abduction just months before his 'death'. As Bolloxinski explains:

"Fortunately, it was not a success. When the aliens beamed into his Gracelands' bedroom to snatch him away, he was not sleeping in bed as they had anticipated, but on the toilet with a double-pack of Twinkies. Finding the bed empty, the aliens gave up and left, but Elvis came back into the bedroom just as they de-materialised. He didn't see much, but he saw enough. And it terrified him."

The story goes that Elvis was so afraid that the Aliens would "come back for him" that he suggested the only escape he could. To fake his own death, so the "Lil' Gray sumbitches" couldn't find him.

Such a mammoth undertaking was only possible with the help of the CIA, the 'secret military' and other shadowy Governmental forces. Elvis used his inside knowledge of the "Cover-up" as a bargaining tool, and, aided by intelligence operatives, was smuggled away from his 'death-bed'² in Gracelands to a secret location, described in Bolloxinski's book as "...probably a cabin in the Rockies. Or somewhere like that."

After a couple of years, when all the fuss had died down, Elvis took advantage of the tidal-wave of Elvis impersonators to move around more freely, even "spending a lot of time working in England's many chip-shops", although he was still shadowed by at least one "spook" at all times.

And it was as a "thank-you" to these people, many of whom had been transferred to Woodbridge and Bentwaters, that Elvis decided to put on a special Christmas show in the hidden depths of Rendlesham Forest, away from the prying eyes of the public.

In his book, Bolloxinski cites fact after fact, tying in the various witness accounts together for the first time, and a clear and disturbing picture begins to emerge. In *Left at East Gate*, Larry Warren describes how a clearing in the forest had suddenly been enveloped in an eerie, glowing mist. Bolloxinski states:

"It may have appeared as 'sinister alien mist' to Warren and to others, but to anyone who has attended a rock concert it's real nature is obvious: dry ice, with lasers playing on it, all ready for the King's dynamic entry."

But it all went horribly wrong. For Elvis and some of his road crew had performed a sound test in the forest the night before, on the 27th, and it was actually a spotlight reflecting off Elvis' body-warmer which the original witnesses had seen. The "triangular" shape: a result of the years of twinkies and cheeseburgers.

On a more sinister note, the Greys had detected the sound-test in their orbit on the dark side of the Moon, and had realised Elvis was alive, and knew exactly where to find him. The following night they returned and attempted one final abduction.

Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Halt saw the UFOs and set out with a team to investigate. At the same time, just as the concert was about to begin, Elvis saw the approaching UFOs and panicked. He ran blindly through the woods, at one point heading directly towards Halt and the others. Halt describes how one of the 'UFOs' appeared:

"At one point, it appeared to throw off glowing particles".

According to Bolloxinski, these glittering lights seen shining through the trees by the military were nothing more than "...their own powerful torches reflecting off the rhinestones on the King's jumpsuit", and "...as it was a particularly garish one – an elfin green – Elvis himself blended easily into the surrounding forest."

To reveal more would do an injustice to Bolloxinski's book. Did Elvis escape and return to his secret, new life? Was he abducted by the returning UFOs, never to return? Is there a film deal in all of this? It's not for me to say...buy, and read the book, to find out.

A five star thumbs up.

² Or "death-toilet", to be more precise -DB

EARLY AUSTRALIA HISTORICAL ENCOUNTERS (part four)

BY BILL CHALKER

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UFOIC (UFO INVESTIGATION CENTRE)

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1930:

AUSTRALIA'S FIRST OFFICIAL UFO INVESTIGATION?

In 1930, an Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) officer, Squadron Leader George Jones, was sent to Warrnambool, Victoria, to investigate reports of mystery aircraft flying over the coast. No explanation was found in this first official RAAF UFO investigation.

Further "mystery aircraft" reports were made in the near Pacific and Papua New Guinea area in 1930, and in 1931 the RAAF was denying any of her planes were the explanation for "mystery planes reported widely in Tasmania."

Jones was to become RAAF Chief of the Air Staff during World War Two, and subsequently Air Marshall Sir George Jones. He was himself to become a UFO witness in 1957. He also became a valuable advocate of serious UFO research, being a patron of the short lived national civilian UFO research organisation **CAPIO** - Commonwealth Aerial Phenomena Investigation Organisation, and a member of **VUFORS** - the Victorian UFO Research Society.

"ET" IN A MANDURAH HUMPY

In 1982 a 67 year old woman saw a picture of "ET", Steven Spielberg's cute alien creation. It made her think of an experience she had as a 15 year old girl, near the estuary at Mandurah, Western Australia. She supplied a report to the Perth UFO Research Group which stated:

"(In 1930 I was) sitting reading with my parents in a humpy, on a block in Mandurah, in Greary Rd, by the light of a hurricane lamp, with the door partly open. The time (was) about 8 pm as we went to bed early.

"A little pink creature walked in. (It was) about 24 inches in height (with) large ears, big bulbous eyes, covered with a film, small hands, large feet, slit of a mouth, no hair, and shiny as if wet or oily.

"We were terrified and my father went white and being a religious man said it was the work of the devil.

"Picking up a prawning net, he picked it up in it and it made a noise like EE...EE and my father put it outside. We never saw it again and went to bed feeling very scared. This was in 1930 and I never thought any more about it until I saw a picture of ET, although only its eyes were the same.

"...It did not have a round body, more straight down like a child's body. I cannot remember seeing any sex organs... (It's shape was) like an elf."

Before we leave this quaint tale behind, I will mention anthropologist's Dr. Charles Mountford's description of a "spirit child" in his fascinating study, *Nomads of the Australian Desert*:

"This child, called mulu-kuranti (nose-spirit), was a mamu (malignant being). Its fingers were twisted, it had ears like a kangaroo, large eyes resembling those of an owl, a grotesque face, and projecting teeth. When Kuntunga (mother of all spirit-children, the "julanja") was suckling this infant, it bit her so often that she finally killed it and left the body in the creek, where it was transformed into (an) irregularly-shaped boulder."

1931:

"THE LONELY SEA AND THE SKY"

While making the first solo plane flight across the Tasman Sea between New Zealand and Australia, on June 10th, 1931, the famous adventurer Francis Chichester encountered "a dull grey-white airship" of ghost-like manner.

Chichester was a truly remarkable man. His encounter with an inexplicable aerial phenomenon is described in his excellent book, *The Lonely Sea and the Sky*.

At 3.00 pm, after seeing the S.S. Kurow battling its way through heavy seas below him, Chichester decided to fly north-west, to avoid facing a storm that lay in his path:

"Round the storm we flew into calm air under a weak lazy sun. I took out the sextant and got two shoots. It took me thirty minutes to work them out, for the engine kept back firing, and my attention wandered every time it did...

"Suddenly, ahead and thirty degrees to the left, there were bright flashes in several places, like the dazzle of a heliograph. I saw a dull grey-white airship coming towards me. It seemed impossible, but I could have sworn that it was an airship, nosing towards me like an oblong pearl. Except for a cloud or two, there was nothing else in the sky.

"I looked around, sometimes catching a flash or a glint, and turning again to look at the airship I found it had disappeared. I screwed up my eyes, unable to believe them, and twisted the seaplane this way and that, thinking that the airship must be hidden by a blind spot. Dazzling flashes continued in four or five different places, but I could not pick out any planes.

"Then, out of some clouds to my right front, I saw another, or the same, airship advancing. I watched it intently, determined not to look away for a fraction of a second: I'd see what happened to this one, if I had to chase it. It drew steadily closer, until perhaps a mile away, when suddenly it vanished. Then it reappeared, close to where it had vanished: I watched with angry intentness.

"It drew closer, and I could see the dull gleam of light on its nose and back. It came on, but instead of increasing in size, it diminished as it approached. When quite near, it suddenly became its own ghost - one second I could see through it, and the next it had vanished. I decided that it could only be a diminutive cloud, perfectly shaped like an airship and then dissolving, but it was uncanny that it should exactly resume the same shape after it once vanished.

"I turned towards the flashes, but those too had vanished. All this was many years before anyone spoke of flying saucers. What ever it was I saw, it seems to have been very much like what people have since claimed to be flying saucers."

1932/3:

A MINI UFO NEAR NAMBOUR

A fifty year old man recounted in 1974, the story of his encounter with a mini-UFO back in

1932 or 1933, near the town of Nambour, in Northern Queensland. He was 8 or 9 at the time, and at about two one afternoon, in about late March or early April, he was playing with some local children. He strayed from them and went over to a nearby hillock, which was surrounded by a small body of water:

"...I put both hands up in front of me and parted this tall grass to look through. I heard a low humming sound, and saw a round object directly in front of me, about four feet away.

"It looked the same shape as if two ordinary saucers were placed face to face and then turned on their sides ... The colour of the object was the same shade of silver grey as a Canberra bomber looks on a dull, rainy, overcast day ... The size of the object was 12 inches in diameter. It hovered 3 inches above the surface of the water.

There was a slight almost imperceptible shiver of the water surface directly below the object as if it was directing a force directly downwards in order to stay in the air ... The waves (of water) were going outward in concentric circles directly below the object...

"...There was a very high speed shiver motion of the object as if a gyro-stabiliser of some kind were keeping it up right.

"As I bent forward to look more closely, the humming sound rose suddenly in pitch and volume, and at the same time a whitish mist began to form between me and the object, but close to it ...

"At the same time ... I felt a tight feeling in the head and as the noise increased, I let go of the tall grass and stepped back. I could not see it any more, and I felt stunned in the head, but I could still hear it humming behind the tall grass

"Soon afterwards, everyone decided to go up to the house, and on the way one girl said suddenly, "What was that?" Something flew up between those trees. "It was a magpie," someone said. "No it was not," said the first girl.

"I did not see anything, but I knew what it was; it was the object flying off.

"That night I noticed large white blisters on both of my hands and I felt out of sorts. Sometime during the night whilst I was asleep most of the blisters burst, and one or two remaining burst during the day and a clear fluid like water came out. I felt better after that..."

1933:

A UFO ABDUCTION IN 1933

Australian mysteries researcher Rex Gilroy records an intriguing tale allegedly from 1933 that reportedly involved an aboriginal woman in a UFO abduction experience at the isolated locality of Discovery Well, on the northern edge of the Great Sandy Desert, in Western Australia.

The story echoes the tribal legends and traditions of men and women being abducted by "sky gods" or "culture heroes" in the dreamtime and the initiation experiences of aboriginal "men of high degree" or shamans.

In Rex Gilroy's account, the aboriginal woman claimed her tribe had been frightened off from Discovery Well when a "large shiny egg" suddenly came down out of the sky. In broad daylight the strange object flew low over them. Several beings, described as strange, grey-skinned and man like, came out of the "egg".

The woman said she was "stunned" by an object carried by one of the beings. Her story indicates she was carried aboard. Inside the "egg" the interior was glowing. She was strapped to a shining table and apparently "experimented with". The woman told stockmen of her experience, but perhaps not surprisingly they laughed at her.

This 1933 tale also anticipates the spate of UFO abduction tales that would virtually dominate the UFO landscape by the 1990s. It was not until 1957 that the sexual abduction experience of Antonio Villas Boas from Brazil occurred. The famous Betty and Barney Hill abduction story in the United States did not take place until 1961. Neither story was well known until the mid 1960s.

1935:

MILITARY MATTERS

On October 10th, 1935, an off duty military man took what was possibly Australia's first UFO photograph at Nobby's Head near Newcastle, NSW. Although the photos are now apparently unavailable, investigators who saw the photo during 1968-69 reported it showed "a definite circular object with details seen well at enlargement."

We have already seen that Bass Strait was no stranger to extraordinary UFO mysteries. The crew of a Beaufort bomber flying at 4,500 feet over Bass Strait, during February, 1944, bore witness to what may have been Australia's earliest "electromagnetic" (EM) case.

At about 2.30 am the plane gained a most unusual companion. A "dark shadow" appeared along side the plane and kept pace with it, at a distance of only some 100 to 150 feet. The Beaufort was travelling at about 235 miles per hour. The object appeared to have a flickering light and flame belching from its rear end. Only about 15 feet of the rear end of the UFO was visible to the bomber crew, apparently due to "reflection of light from the exhaust."

The strange object stayed with the bomber for some 18 to 20 minutes, during which time all radio and direction finding instruments refused to function. It finally accelerated away from the plane at approximately three times the speed of the bomber.

Upon landing, the pilot reported the incident to his base superiors, but he claimed he was only laughed at. Such a reaction seems extraordinary in retrospect since it turns out that Beauforts figured heavily in official RAAF list of planes that "went missing without trace" during World War Two in the Bass Strait area - an area that was not linked to any significant enemy activity. I have been told that the Beauforts had a mechanical problem that may have accounted for some of these losses.

1944/5:

THE "LITTLE FELLAS" AT THE SIGN OF THE TAKAHE

Mrs. E. Church, a sister-in-charge of the operating theatre of the Cashmere Sanatorium, at Christchurch, New Zealand, encountered something truly extraordinary in August, 1944 or 1945, while walking alone amongst the low hill slopes and scrub at the Sign of the Takahe, in the Port Hills area. Noticing a cloud coming in quickly, she decided to head back to catch a train. On the way, Mrs. Church encountered a strange object resting on a rise, near the road. She approached it and stared at it for about 8 to 10 minutes. Before her was a bizarre sight.

The object was like an "upturned saucer" and appeared to be primarily constructed of what

looked like vertically laid tiles, "that fitted together perfectly." It appeared to be about 18 to 20 feet wide and 8 to 9 feet high.

Mrs. Church though, "What will they invent next?" Then she saw the "little fellas". Small entities, no more than 4 feet tall, one inside and one outside the object, were present. They gave the appearance of just a green-coloured form in a transparent oblong packing casing. They seemed to be watching the Industries Fair and the city below. The city lights were coming on. The figures seemed to have quite big "heads" in proportion to their "bodies" - nearly half body height.

The cloud observed earlier came right down and enveloped the scene. Mrs. Church decided to get closer. She got to within about 18 feet of the object, when a sound her approach made, drew the attention of the "chap" outside. He had a "plastic" helmet which flipped over and he "drifted" into the object in "a kind of sliding movement", through a very small opening. A whirring noise commenced and the craft rose slowly in a vertical fashion. She lost sight of it in the cloud. Mrs. Church felt a sense of loss with its departure.

Her experience was investigated during 1973 by Bruce Harding. Mrs. Church never checked to see if the "thing" left any trace of its presence at the Sign of the Takahe.

While many reports of UFOs were made in Australia during the period from 1947 to 1950, few were widely known at the time. Many were reported later. Here is one example:

1949:

A STRANGE AERIAL CONSTRUCTION

In October, 1949, two men observed a UFO near Townsville, Queensland. One of them, Mr. J. Baxter, recalled the event in a 1967 letter to the UFO Investigation Centre:

"I was a commercial fisherman, fishing at the time for spanish mackerel, with a chap named John Campbell ... It was a bad season, and we were fishing desperately to get out of the red, (and) not to be easily distracted by any thing unusual.

"Well! We were fishing off North Palm Island ... on a clear, bright, sunny day, with perfect visibility, when we saw this object - a bright, shining, metallic cigar shaped construction, (over 100 feet long) poised

about 70 to 80 feet above the sea, and about 500 or 600 yards distant.

"There was no sign of wings, propellers, or portholes

"At the time we were making circles in the boat, to try and excite the mackerel ... We would lose sight of it (as they turned) for a minute or maybe two. But we kept watching it, mainly because we were intrigued by the fact that it was motionless, just poised there, between sea and sky.... "We had a noisy engine ... so we did not hear any noise from it... We watched it, as we made our tight circles, for maybe, half an hour, and while I was intently watching, the bow swung between us and it, and it was gone - without any fuss, or even a contrail. This was incredible, and really rocked us, that anything could get out of sight on a clear day, almost instantaneously. Not even the modern planes of today could equal such a performance."

EARLY FLOURISHES

The contemporary and widespread public flirtation with "flying saucers" in Australia really only got under way in 1950 with reports from Geelong and Avoca, Victoria, during June and July.

We have already seen evidence of earlier cursory interest by the military. However, the earliest still extant sighting report in the Directorate of Air Force Intelligence (DAFI) files was a nocturnal light account at Bass Point, NSW, on July 16, 1950. The growing number of reports that involved official agencies and highly regarded sources served to heightened official interest, initially from two quarters, namely the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and the Department of Civil Aviation (DCA).

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WARSHIPS SHOT DOWN UFO

U.S. warships patrolling Persian Gulf shot down a UFO during a battle with Saddam Hussein's troops during Operation Desert Storm. Now a Top Secret mission to recover the UFO debris is underway.

The U.S. Navy downed a UFO on January 24, 1991, according to a classified report detailing allied cooperation in the war to liberate Kuwait. It was detected by radar for nearly 30 seconds and was flying in an erratic manner.

The order to down the aircraft was given when it buzzed several American ships, including the USS Wisconsin, USS England and USS O'Brien and two British frigates, the HMS Battleaxe and HMS Jupiter. All vessels in the area fired on the alien spacecraft, which was described by officers as a chromium-plated aircraft, which emitted a high pitched piercing sound unlike conventional jets. The UFO was most likely downed by a tomahawk cruise missile, although every ship in the US task force deployed in the Persian Gulf emptied its conventional armaments to destroy it.

News of the alien involvement in the Persian Gulf War was first revealed when pentagon intelligence reports of the U.S. armed forces performance were partially disclosed in Washington. For security reasons, much of the sensitive information is still classified top secret. Rumours of the UFO incident were verified by London based reporter Anthony Edens, who gained access to the joint

American-British accounts of the UFO incident, revealed in London.

The UFO skirmish is by far the most pertinent military knowledge gained from the Persian Gulf War, says Edens. The sophisticated military hardware of the United States was not only superior to Saddam Hussein's feared Republican guard troops but also to the UFO.

The hunt for the UFO debris was reportedly delayed until the memorial day weekend, when President Bush issued an executive order to recover the downed spacecraft. Intelligence analysts are relying on space satellite transmissions of the Persian gulf to race the whereabouts of the UFO debris.

Respected UFOlogist Craig Shopley says if the UFO incident resulted in the death of any aliens, the results could be devastating for all mankind.

"Alien spacecraft are probably monitoring the earth to learn more about us", he says. "I'm sure that many Americans will disappear this summer, and will be abducted by aliens who want to interrogate them about the gulf war."

(Editors Note: This story has appeared in numerous places recently, including UFO-based web-sites, and the pages of Fortean Times. As yet, I have not been able to verify it, so accept it on face value until further notice.

Tom believes it, though.)

"GULF WAR UFO" SHOT DOWN IN FLAMES?

By Dave Baker

Way back in Vol.2, #4 (October 1998), *Project Red Book* featured a case which, if true, would surely rank as one of the most incredible military / UFO encounters on record.³

The case was never satisfactorily resolved and has remained in our files as nothing but an interesting story.

After reviving the case at a recent YUFOS meeting, and coming across the Gulf War UFO story we present on page 15 of this issue, I decided to take another look at the case.

BACKGROUND

In August 1998, myself and fellow YUFOS member Richard Moss were guests on Sheffield's *Magic FM*, a local radio station. Tim Shaw hosted a phone-in programme, which had earned itself quite a reputation for near-the-knuckle topics, and was actually cancelled some time later for this very reason. It actually had more in common with the likes of such bottom-shelf TV shows as *Ibiza Uncovered* and *Big Brother* than *The Mark Thomas Comedy Product*, and so we were not expecting sensible conversation on UFOs – and didn't really get it.

Among the mish-mash of callers, though, we heard from a man who claimed that he and fellow Gulf War troops, just prior to "Desert Storm", had witnessed a UFO, which circled their stronghold and resisted all attempts to engage it.

Although he spoke for only a few minutes on air, I made arrangements to contact him privately. When we spoke over the phone the next day, the witness expanded his tale but made only one change to the basic details: that he had not served as a radar operator as he had claimed, on air, but had been part of a "12-man recon unit".

A couple of days later, as soon as it could be arranged, Richard and myself travelled to speak to the witness in his own home, where the story was expanded even further.

³ "Did a UFO "Buzz" Allied Troops Prior to Desert Storm?" by Dave Baker, p 12-16.

First of all, though, here is an account of the event, as detailed by the witness, who we shall call 'B'.

THE EVENT

The encounter took place on the night of 10th/11th January 1991, shortly before what would become known as "Desert Storm".

'B' was part of a 12 man detail attached to the 7th Armoured Division, otherwise known as 'The Desert Rats'.

"We were a short-range recon group whose job was to go behind enemy lines to access the quality of enemy soldiers and weaponry and report back. We would set out from one stronghold to the next, a distance of around 10 miles, over a period of 24-48 hours."

The stronghold in question (which B was unwilling to reveal exactly) was located approx. 3.5 miles over the border and consisted of an estimated 400-500 troops, SAMs and much heavy artillery.

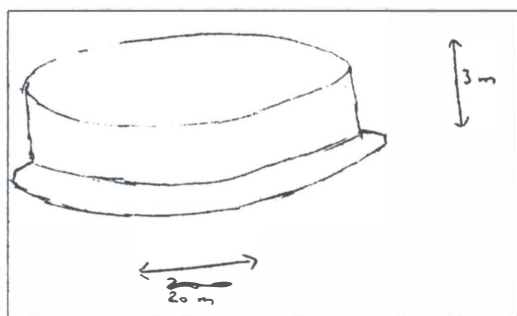
At around 3:00 am, B and the recon team arrived back at the stronghold, their work for the night complete. It was a typical desert night, calm, crystal clear, and very, very cold.

They had just jumped down from their jeeps and were stretching their legs before checking their gear and bunking down for the night, when excitement began to ripple through the camp.

"Looking SW, we saw this 'thing' approaching our camp. At first, we thought it was coming from behind 'our' lines and so was one of 'ours'. But as it came closer, we realised that this thing was not a jet, nor a helicopter." B said.

The object appeared to be a disc with a lip or rim around its base. It was around 20 metres in diameter and about 3 metres high, with a blue/grey, non-metallic colouring, and a soft light-blue luminescence. There were no lights, windows, wings, fins, cockpit or insignia visible. It had no visible means of propulsion,

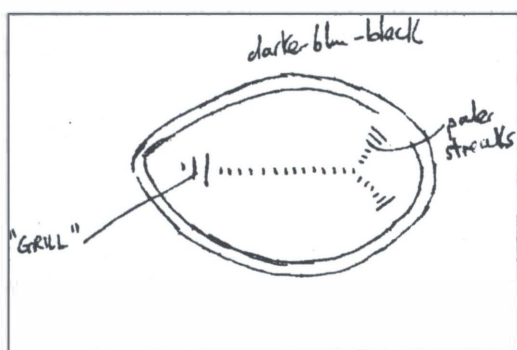
and the only sound was that of displaced air as it moved.



(fig 1) "B's sketch" of the object

Throughout the event, the object would hover outside the camp at a range of around 1500 metres at tree-top height, then abruptly sweep in a smooth semi-circle across the camp to the opposite side, pause again, then return to its previous position.

At one point, its path took it directly above B and he was able to look up and get a good view of its underside. The underside appeared to me more of an oval shape, a dark blue/black, with a 'Y'-shaped grill, or pattern of pale streaks.



(fig. 2) "B's" sketch of the underside of the object

"When the thing first appeared, the call went out to the Sand Battreys to see if they had an 'IFF' on it." (B explained that this means 'Indicate Friend or Foe' and is a message sent out to an approaching object or aircraft in a bid to identify it. If the correct message is not returned, the thing is considered hostile.)

"The message came back from the Sand Battreys 'IFF on what?' to which we replied, 'That thing about 3km behind us!', but the Battreys were adamant that there was nothing there.

"Well that was it - panic stations!" B said, "Men were running for cover. The armoured vehicles closed down their hatches and everyone was trying to get either into the vehicles or into NBC (*Nuclear, Biological, Chemical*) suits, scared that it was some sort of chemical attack."

Obviously, many things happened at once, and B can only relate either what he personally saw, or was informed of later. These included:

- *The sergeant of B's detail used the land-rover's mounted MILAN anti-tank launcher to track the object. The MILAN was equipped with infra-red sights, but the object did not register a heat signature, and could not lock on to it. B stated that this meant that the object had to be the same temperature as the surrounding air.

- * B's own vehicle was carrying a laser designator, but it would not lock on to the object. According to B, this is almost impossible; even a cloud will give some kind of reflection, and suggested that the object was somehow absorbing the laser

- *Rapier's were unable to lock on as the object did not register on their radar

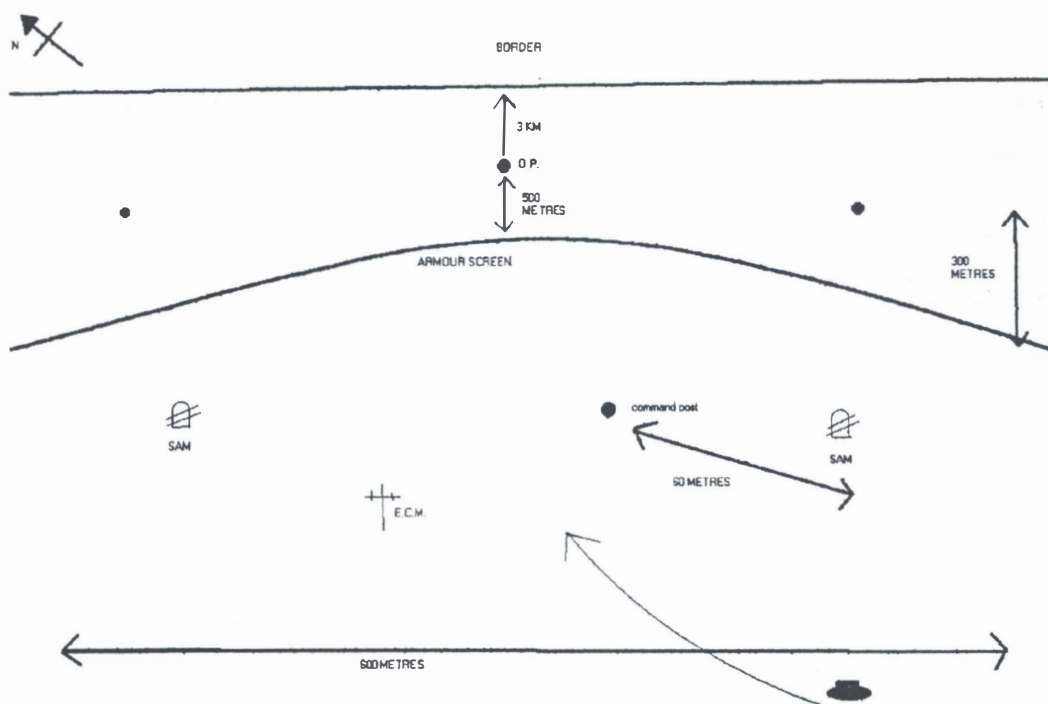
- *The rear vehicle had a javelin, which the driver attempted to use, but both missiles refused to fire.

- *The ECM (*electronic counter measure*) unit couldn't pick up an electromagnetic signature from the object. Again, B said this was unheard of, as even a car would be registered by an ECM

B was not sure if anyone attempted to use firearms against the object, but he did not hear any gunfire.

Afterwards, all equipment was fully checked and found to be functioning perfectly.

A message was sent out to the AWAC's, 150 miles away to see if they were picking the UFO up, but they detected nothing and had no idea what the 7th were talking about. However, they scrambled two F-15s to the area.



(B's map of the stronghold)

As the F-15s came in and approached the camp, the UFO shot vertically upwards at a terrific speed. The F-15s attempted to follow but could not climb rapidly enough.

"As they gave up and levelled out, the object was suddenly behind them" B continued. "It shot between them and away, and the F-15s went to full afterburners in an attempt to catch up with it. The UFO then vanished from sight with the F-15s in pursuit."

Although they were not personally in radio contact with the jets and have no idea if the pilots could actually see the UFO or detect it with their equipment, the way the jets attempted to chase it suggests that it was at least visible to the pilots. There was no attempt to shoot the UFO down, unless of course the F-15s weaponry failed to function.

Talk the next day was that eventually the UFO again shot vertically upwards and was lost. The F-15s were recalled.

B says that his unit left a few hours later to resume patrol and they were never formally de-briefed, which was why he felt reasonably comfortable talking about it. (Even though he would not give many details about himself in case he was identified.)

However, he was later told by friends that on the following day, superior officers issued a statement / command that what the men had witnessed was a temperature inversion, or ball lightning, something of that nature.

INITIAL THOUGHTS

B himself would not divulge any details which would identify him other than that his "12-man detail" was attached to the Desert Rats. He had been medically discharged a couple of years earlier due to a back injury and now held a job as a wire drawer. He was unmarried, and lived alone.

As is the case on interviewing witnesses in their own home, we casually tried to get a picture of the man from...

Although he had shelves of books, and I made a point of looking through them (with B's consent), there were no UFO or paranormal books on view. B's collection comprised of science fiction novels, thrillers and military books, both fiction and non-fiction. He also had numerous construction kit models of military aircraft.

The interview began with both myself and Richard taking notes, and the conversation was taped, again with B's consent.

This was the point where, referring to notes we made earlier, we attempted to 'catch him out' with any inconsistencies and mistakes made to the earlier testimonies, but none were made that we were aware of. No details were changed from the previous two times B had told his story.

A number of things occurred to us as we spoke to B, which we discussed later, and at YUFOS meetings with other members. Our thoughts are set out below;

POINT: On face value, B appeared to have detailed knowledge of military terminology, equipment and technique. Indeed, on a number of occasions, Richard or myself had to interrupt his account in order for him to clarify a term, such as "IFF". He also used this vernacular freely and with apparent ease, as most people unconsciously do when discussing their jobs or interest.

COUNTERPOINT: Richard and myself know very little of military matters, and although the jargon sounded authentic, we had no real knowledge of this. Also, an obsessive type can easily pick up this sort of speech from books and other media. For example, *Star Trek* fans can spout techno-babble as effectively as the TV characters trained at Star Fleet, but the 'science' is of course mere fiction.

POINT: The time factor. DJ Tim Shaw had only thought of the UFO subject and contacted us the day before the show ran. This was common practice so he could remain topical. He rarely advertised what the show's subject would be until a few moments before going on air, just in case a guest didn't turn up, or a better topic presented itself. This night was no exception, and we were not billed to appear on air until half-way through the show. B's call came through the queue around half-way through our section, so all in all he would only have had about 20-30 minutes to come up with a remarkably detailed story, including the time he waited in line. Could anyone have concocted such a meticulous narrative in such a short time?

COUNTERPOINT: We must consider two things; There was no reason to believe that if the story was fake, he had made the story up on the spot; for all we know, he could have been passing this story around to anyone who

would listen for weeks, months or even years, and leapt at the chance of relating it again on hearing of our radio appearance.

We also have to consider that some people do have an incredible imagination and ability to create richly detailed fictions on the fly. Acclaimed authors have been known to write a short story in minutes, and make an excellent job of it too.

POINT: I was also interested in the fact that B's own involvement in this exciting story was negligible. It is often the case that a liar, or to me more gracious, a "spinner of tall-tales", create themselves to be the focal point of their narrative, the hero or at least the central character. This story was not like that, with B playing little or no part in his own story. In fact, it appeared that for all his military training, he did nothing but stand and stare at the UFO and the mayhem it caused.

COUNTERPOINT: We must consider that this non-involvement also made his account more 'waterproof', in that he was allowed to be more nebulous about important details. This could also explain why B changed his status from radar operator to the much more vague "recon" position. He may have been afraid that we would ask questions of a technical nature, which he would not have been able to answer.

B 'S SKETCH.

As previously stated, when Richard and I arrived at his home, B had already drawn the object, and a map of the camp. This meant that we did not see him draw it there and then, and it is possible that he could have copied it.

POINT: The sketch, even to the angle that he drew it on the paper, is exactly like a UFO that appears in a series of classic photographs taken by Rex Heflin on August 3, 1965 in Santa Anna, California. Branded by the U.S. Air Force investigation Project Blue Book to be a hoax, the UFO was believed to be a model no more than 3ft in diameter.

This photo, or others from the series, appears in countless UFO books and magazines, and could easily have been the source of B's idea.

Another factor is it's very simplicity: with no light configurations, insignia, window arrangement, or other details to memorise, it is a picture anyone could easily remember, and

draw over and over again, even months or years later, without any trouble.



(The famous "Rex Helfin" photo)

COUNTERPOINT: It has to be said that just because B's sketch resembles a well-known UFO photo does not mean that B ever saw it, let alone copied it.

I was, however, intrigued by was the sketch of the object's underside, which is unlike anything I can remember seeing previously in UFO literature. Whether this is because the UFO was real, and unique, or B merely had a good imagination remains to be seen.

INVESTIGATION

Before going to the extent of contacting the MoD, which would probably be futile anyway, I thought that the simplest way of checking B's story was to try to trace someone else who was there at the time and location of the alleged encounter. If this was not possible, I wanted at the very least to find someone who was knowledgeable enough to critique B's story; not in terms of whether the event happened, but on B's usage of terms, words, and even the details of the 7th Armoured.

An internet search on "The Desert Rats" provided some background details on the Brigade, and their involvement in the Gulf War. Consulting war diaries, including one which appears on the "Desert Rats" own website, I was able to pinpoint the movements of the 7th for much of their time in the Gulf. Although the dates in question were not among

the detailed, I did find out where the Rats were prior to and after the 10th/11th January.

I also discovered that "the Desert Rats" is the nick-name of the 7th Armoured *Brigade*, not the 7th Armoured *Division*.

More fruitfully, I was actually able to contact a number of Gulf War veterans via a website which is primarily dedicated to the study of Gulf War Sickness and to offer support to families of servicemen involved. In view of the seriousness of the subject the site was dedicated to, I wanted to tread carefully. It took some time, but I eventually was able to post a brief message to the web-site's mailing-list, which said:

Hi all,

Sorry to intrude on your time, but I am a writer / researcher wishing to contact Gulf War veterans who were part of the 7th Armoured Division, positioned on the Iraq/Kuwait border on the 10/11th January 1991.

If this does not concern any of you personally, can any of you point me to any newsletters or websites where I can search further?

Within hours, I had been contacted by a handful of veterans, and, coupled with my own research into the history of the Gulf War and the Desert Rats in particular a number of discrepancies began to emerge which cast some doubt on the veracity of B's story.

I shall reveal these in the second part of this article, printed in PRB next month.